



# Truman VA BULLETIN

January 25, 2008

## WELCOME

**Susan Brown**, Security Assistant (Police)  
**Jennifer Goul, RN** (PS)  
**Kala Gupta, RN** (PS)  
**Megan McCarthy**, Graduate Nurse Technician (PS)  
**David Muckerheide**, Medical Support Assistant (PS)  
**Leann Olson**, Medical Support Assistant (PC)  
**Nitu Patel**, Medical Technologist (CS)  
**Adam Whaley-Connell, MD**, Staff Physician (PC)  
**Amber Young**, Medical Technician (CS)

## FAREWELL

**Alexandria Neier**, Student Nurse Technician (PS)  
**Cameron Scott**, Laborer (FM)

## VOLUNTARY LEAVE TRANSFER PROGRAM

**Tiffany Colvin** (CS), **Sarah Hafner** (PS) and **Frances Kiene** (PS) have been approved for the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program. Contact **Lena Warren** (HR) at extension 56397 for information.

## EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARDS

### Employee of the Month

**Sarah M. Merrell** (BUS) – January 2008 ☺

### Star of the Month

**Ashley E. Bick** (PS) – November 2007 ★

**Walter L. Beavers** (FM) – December 2007 ★

### Good Catch Patient Safety Award – 2007

**Nancy J. Dietz, RPh** (Pharmacy) ✓

## TRUMAN VA HOSPITAL BLOOD DRIVE – FEB. 4-5

The next American Red Cross blood drive at Truman VA will be on Monday, Feb. 4 from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. and Tuesday, Feb. 5 from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the hospital auditorium. The "gift of life" is needed and very much appreciated by the hundreds of recipients in the mid-Missouri area. Potential blood donors should register at the blood drive link under Hospital News on the medical center's home page. For more information about the blood drive, contact **Larry Propp** (Research) at extension 56553.

## VA CARDIOLOGIST TO RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

**Kul Aggarwal, MD**, Chief, Cardiology Section, Specialty Care Service Line, will receive the Hugh Stephenson Award at the third annual Dr. Hugh Stephenson Heart Ball on Saturday, Feb. 2. The annual black-tie event is sponsored by MU Health Care and the American Heart Association and features the award named after Dr. Stephenson, who was heavily involved in the establishment of a four-year medical school at MU in the 1950s and performed the University Hospital's first open-heart surgery. Stephenson has served the University of Missouri for more than 50 years – former president of the University Board of Curators, former interim dean of the medical school and former chair of the department of surgery.

Dr. Aggarwal is the first Truman VA physician to receive the award. After receiving his medical degree in India, he completed internal medicine residency training in Ireland and England as well as at the New York Medical College in Bronx, NY. Prior to joining the Truman VA medical staff in August 1995, he completed a Cardiology Fellowship at MU. Congratulations, Dr. Aggarwal!

## NETWORK INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICER

**Chrys Higginbotham**, Information Security Officer (ISO) at Truman VA, was selected recently as the VA Heartland Network (VISN 15) ISO. Congratulations, Chrys!

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION – DO NOT DISTURB SIGNS ON PATIENT DOORS

As a result of an employee suggestion, gold plated "Do Not Disturb" signs will be posted on the door of a deceased patient's room on our inpatient units. The purpose of these signs is to alert staff members of the situation and to maintain proper respect for the deceased patient and family members. If you see one of these signs, please check at the nursing station prior to entering the room.



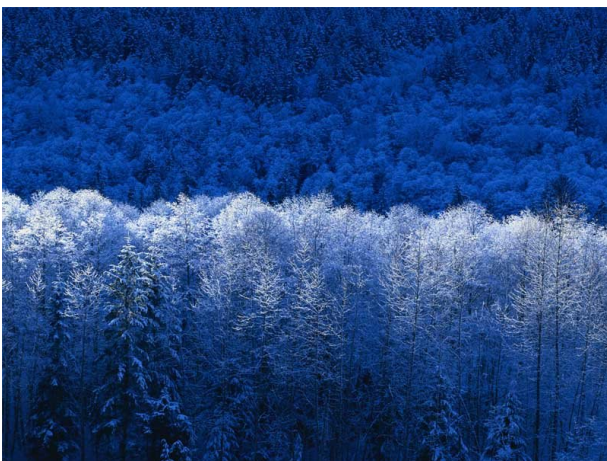
## THE HATCH ACT AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

The presidential campaign is well underway, so be careful what you do and say in the workplace – especially in an e-mail. Sending or even forwarding an e-mail on your government computer that advocates the election or defeat of a political candidate can put you in violation of the law and possibly get you fired.

The Hatch Act, passed in 1939, restricts the political activities of federal employees. You cannot engage in political activity while on duty, in a government office, using a government vehicle or wearing an official uniform and you cannot run for office in a partisan election. Also, you cannot use your official authority to interfere with an election or solicit/receive political contributions.

In 1993, Congress eased some of the restrictions to permit federal employees to take an active role in political campaigns. The changes have allowed federal employees outside of office hours to manage political campaigns, serve as delegates to political conventions, organize fundraisers and distribute brochures for a political party on Election Day outside polling places. The 1993 amendments were put in place before the Internet, e-mail and YouTube videos began transforming how Americans communicate and go about their work. The line between casual conversation and political activity that is not permitted may be unclear to many employees. Officials from the Office of Special Counsel, which investigates and prosecutes Hatch Act allegations, report that they make determinations of violations on a case-by-case basis, looking at the content of the message, who sent the e-mail and how many people received the e-mail from the government computer. Because e-mails can be forwarded, they can take on a life that goes far beyond a chat among friends. When it comes to the Hatch Act, there is no "water-cooler" exception.

For additional information, check out the Web site for the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov).



## VARIOUS VA ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NOTE

- ▶ The VA health care system introduced the pacemaker, major innovations in prosthetics and was instrumental in the development of the CT scan. VA physicians performed the first liver transplant. VA is a world leader in treating spinal cord injury, blind rehabilitation, post traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse.
- ▶ The VA benefits system has paid for the education of more than 22 million veterans and has guaranteed more than 18 million home loans. It is estimated that the taxes paid by veterans that graduated from college under the GI Bill have returned \$8 for every dollar they were paid in school.
- ▶ The VA health care system provides training opportunities for one half of all U.S. medical school students and one third of all physician residents. With more than 1,200 educational affiliations, more than 80,000 health professions students receive training at VA facilities every year.
- ▶ Unlike many public and private hospitals, every VA medical center is accredited under the strict standards published and administered by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO).
- ▶ The VA health care system boasts three Nobel Laureates.
- ▶ More than 31,000 mid-Missouri veterans received health care services last year at Truman VA and/or our five Community Based Outpatient Clinics. That includes 837 combat veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- ▶ VA's 124 national cemeteries provide perpetual care in a dignified setting for 2.3 million deceased veterans.

### MEALS ON WHEELS "BIG WHEELS" FUND RAISER

Volunteer your assistance to Meals On Wheels, the local not-for-profit social service agency involved in a unique partnership with Truman VA, by ordering a "Big Wheels" box lunch prepared by Jack's Gourmet Restaurant. Delivery will be on any of the following dates: Feb. 6, 7, 8, 11, 12 or 13. You may choose either a ham and turkey combo or a veggie sandwich. Meals include fruit salad, vegetable salad, dessert and soda for \$10. Half the cost (\$5) is tax deductible. Please call **Linda Duffen** at extension 56304 by Friday, Feb. 1 to order your lunch. Proceeds raised from this event enable Meals On Wheels volunteers to deliver thousands of meals throughout the year to Columbia's homebound senior and disabled citizens that might not otherwise receive a hot meal.

*Enjoy Your Freedom? Thank A Veteran!*